NP

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absence of a nucleic acid in a sample which comprises the steps of

ρι (a) contacting under hybridizable conditions said sample with at least one compound comprising the structure:

T560X

wherein each of [B,] B'[,] <u>and</u> B" represents a <u>purine</u>, 7-deazapurine, or pyrimidine moiety covalently bonded to the C¹'-position of the sugar moiety, provided that whenever [B,] B' or B" is <u>purine</u> or 7-deazapurine, the sugar moiety is attached at the Nº-position of the <u>purine</u> or 7[©] deazapurine, and whenever [B,] B' or B" is pyrimidine the sugar moiety is attached at the N¹-position of the pyrimidine;

wherein B represents 7-deazapurine or pyrimidine moiety covalently bonded to the C¹¹-position of the sugar moiety, provided that whenever B is 7-deazapurine, the sugar moiety is attached at the N¹-position of the 7-deazapurine, and whenever B is pyrimidine the sugar moiety is attached at the N¹-position of the pyrimidine;

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Enz-1 (Div. III)

Degardining consider

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- wherein A comprises at least three carbon atoms and represents at least one component of a signalling moiety capable of producing a detectable signal;
- wherein B and A are covalently attached directly or indirectly through a linkage group, said linkage group not interfering substantially with the characteristic ability of said compound to hybridize with said nucleic acid or of A to be detected;
- P) wherein if B is 7-deazapurine, A is attached to the 7-position thereof, and if B is pyrimidine, A is attached to the 5-position thereof;
- $P^{\,l}$ wherein m, n and p are integers, provided that m and p are not simultaneously 0 and provided further n is never 0; and

PI 13 wherein z represents H- or HO-; and

(b) detecting said compound or compounds so as to detect said nucleic acid.

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